



WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. OF L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS.

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

No. 46.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
HEADQUARTERS

801-BOW ST. N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.
FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT

COMPROMISE EFFECTED

Washington, Feb. 17.--The controversy between the plate printers' union and the senate printing committee, the latter desiring to install power presses, to be used in the printing of all government money and securities, has been adjusted. The agreement reached provides that hereafter the proviso to the act of July 1, 1898, directing that all bonds, notes and checks shall be printed on hand roller presses, shall not apply to checks, the backs and tints of all United States bonds, the backs and tints of all United States paper money and the backs and tints of bonds and paper money issued by any of the insular possessions of the United States; any or all of which shall be printed from intaglio plates and on such plate printing presses as may be directed by the Secretary of the Treasury, said processes to be operated by plate printers except that checks and tints may be printed by any desired process. In addition, the backs of all United States paper money shall be printed from four-subject plates and the faces of all internal revenue stamps now printed from intaglio plates on hand roller or power plate printing presses shall continue to be printed from intaglio plates, on hand roller or power plate printing presses, as the Secretary of the Treasury may determine, and said presses to be operated by plate printers. The agreement further provides that not more than one-fifth of the total number of hand roller presses shall be displaced in each fiscal year. The contention of the plate printers is that the printing done by the government on power presses opens the way for extensive counterfeiting.

EXONERATED BY DEPARTMENT

Washington, Feb. 17.--A statement has been given publicity to the effect that the department of justice has made the positive declaration that President Samuel Gompers and Secretary Frank Morrison of the American Federation of Labor have been completely exonerated by the federal grand jury. In all of the evidence brought before the jury there was nothing which even remotely indicated that they had any knowledge of the alleged dynamiting conspiracy. This is not news to the membership of the organizations of labor.

Machinists, through strike in Seattle, Wash., have secured the eight-hour day in most of the smaller shops.

DEFECTIVE RAILS

Washington, Feb. 17--None of the Steel Rail Manufacturers accused by Louis D. Brandies of being largely responsible for railroad accidents in the United States by making inferior rails, has uttered a word on this important subject. In accentuation of the serious menace to life and property caused by alleged defective rails, dispatches from various sections of the country during the recent severe cold weather state that "railroad rails have crushed like wood and on many roads pilot engines have been sent ahead of every important train." In this connection railroad men recall a broad but positive assertion made a few years ago by E. H. Harriman, that one of the chief difficulties encountered in increasing the efficiency of the railroads was found in the poor quality of rails with which he had found the lines he controlled had been equipped. A scathing report was made by experts of the Interstate Commerce Commission in November last, in reference to the terrible disaster on the Lehigh Valley R. R. at Manchester, N. Y., in which 29 lives were lost. It is also recalled, that at that time the Commissioner assigned two chief experts, Hiram W. Belnap, chief inspector of safety appliances, and James D. Howard, to make an investigation. They reported that defects in rails were so common that it was recommended that a sweeping investigation should be made of all the railroads in the United States. It is said that the development of these defects progresses with the age of rails, and the fear has been expressed that a long series of serious accidents must be expected if a remedy is not applied. The broken rail causing the accident at Manchester, N. Y. was manufactured by the Bethlehem Steel Co., open-hearth process, 80 per cent discard, 90 pounds to the yard, and was rolled Dec. 4, 1909, and was known as "A" rail, which is the rail rolled from the ingot. After the accident it was found that this rail had been broken into many pieces, the first being 31 inches. Inspection showed that it was defective, being what is known as a piped rail. Analysis of this defective part showed that piping is due to slag originating in the steel furnace.

THE FIGHT AGAINST CONVICT LABOR

New York, Feb. 17--Prison contractors throughout the country are bending every energy to thwart the onward march of sentiment against the contracting of convicts to private manufacturers. Every obstacle known to human ingenuity is being brought into play. Some years back the Connecticut legislature granted an appropriation to build a state reformatory. Two years were spent in the selection of a site and construction. After completion, a superintendent was appointed, this being in the spring of 1911. The Reliance Manufacturing Company made a desperate effort to have the contract system established at the new institution but failed, and has resisted all attempts to transfer any of the inmates from the old prison to the new reformatory. The business of the company has expanded to such an extent that it claims it needs all of the inmates of the old prison. The opening of the new reformatory was fixed for June 1, 1911, then for October 1, 1911, and then again for January 1, 1912. The opening has now again been postponed until some time next fall. As a matter of fact the Reliance Manufacturing Company has placed a veto on the Acts of the State through its representatives.

WANTS COURTS RESPECTED

Washington, Feb.17--At the recent meeting of the New York State Bar Association, of which United States Senator Root is president, he said: "If judicial license is to be placed on a parity with political opinions in the public mind, judicial decision will interpret the law always to suit the majority of the moment, and the recall will be the natural and logical expression of the relation to be assumed by the people and the courts". The followers of the Taft legal mind appear to have a fear that the law will be interpreted in a different manner than at present. The people of this country, however, judging by their present attitude, are not in favor of defying the courts, but treating them as public institutions that should be just as amenable to the people as every other governmental institution.

AN INTERESTING STORY

Washington, Feb.17.--In the February number of Everybody's Magazine, there began a story entitled, "Big Business and the Bench, How Courts Have Been Invaded and Judges Swayed by the Powers of Corruption". These articles have been written by C. E. Connolly, a one-time resident of Butte, Mont., the city where first as a public official he became aware of the pollution of the stream of justice by the big copper interests of that camp. The first article is intensely interesting and there is an array of facts marshalled and proven which must be appalling to every lover of justice. It is well worth the perusal of every individual interested in public affairs.

KENTUCKY LAW DISOBEYED

Frankfort, Ky., Feb.17.--Two years ago a law was enacted by the state legislature converting the penitentiary in this city into a reformatory. Nothing has been done, however, by the board of prison commissioners because the Hoge-Montgomery Company, which holds contract at the institution, refused to allow the necessary changes to be made. The company proposed to give its consent to the execution of the law if its contracts were extended six years after expiration in 1914. The board of prison commissioners agreed to the proposal, but it was declared illegal by the attorney general, whereupon the commissioners calmly announced that the law would not be carried out. The fight is to be continued against this flagrant violation of law.

BEING TRIED FOR PEONAGE

Lexington, Ky.--Feb.17--Ten prominent and wealthy lumber men are being tried in the United States district court on peonage charges. The defendants, it is alleged, have held workmen prisoners while they worked in the mountains, there being 56 counts in the indictments.

TO PROTECT BALLOT

Washington, Feb.17.--A bill making it illegal for employers of labor, during Presidential elections, to threaten the employes with the closing down of factories or reduction of wages should certain candidates or party be elected, has been introduced by Congressman Pepper of Iowa. A fine of \$1,000 or imprisonment for not less than a year is provided in the bill.

CALIFORNIA'S EXTRA SESSION

Washington, Feb.17.--A detailed report issued by the California State Federation of Labor states that the extra session of the legislature passed a resolution to submit to the people a constitutional amendment providing for the free distribution of text books in all elementary schools of the State. Two bills increasing the power of the industrial accident board in the gathering of personal injury statistics also passed, as well as a bill providing for inter-insurance against risks of any kind, including liabilities for accidental injuries to employees. A series of bills were also passed providing the machinery for making effective the initiative, referendum and recall. The latter bills will put into operation the constitutional amendments which were adopted at the last general election.

AUSTRALIAN STRIKE

London, Feb.17.--A letter received from Adelaide, Australia, states that the laborers of that State went on strike for a wage of 10s a day. The laborers succeeded in getting work in the suburbs, and the master builders, realizing that they were defeated, sought the aid of the Employers' Federation, who ordered the lime merchants to refuse to supply lime to any contractor who was paying his laborers more than 8s a day, consequently there has been a lockout in the building trades. The entire matter was referred by the Builders' Laborers Federation to the Federal Arbitration court.

MUNICIPAL WORKERS STRIKE

London, Feb.17.--A strike of municipal workers is on at Stalybridge, the sanitary workers, highway employees, and lamp lighters demanding an increase of wages. They demand a minimum wage of 25s, and that six discharged tramway men be reinstated. About 200 men are affected.

BALLOTING ON STRIKE

London, Feb.17.--The service men at the Yorkshire collieries, consisting of about 10,000 men, are taking a ballot as to whether they shall strike to enforce an eight hour day and a minimum wage scale.

SHIP OWNERS' CONFERENCE

Liverpool, Feb.17.--A special conference of Liverpool ship owners is scheduled to be held shortly to consider the seamen's demand for a 32s 6d wage on certain Liverpool weekly boats.

PLATER GIRLS ON STRIKE

Holyoke, Mass.-Feb.17.--The plater girls at the Holyoke Mills of the American Writing Paper company have organized, with a membership of over 100, and have struck against the company. The cause of the trouble was the introduction of an efficiency system which increased the work of each operative one-half, without any added compensation. It is said that all of the girls in the department affected save two joined the organization and only three have returned to work since the strike occurred.

A CORRECTION

Washington, Feb. 17.--Last week a dispatch was received in Washington to the effect that Bert H. Connors, on trial in Los Angeles, charged with complicity in dynamiting the Hall of Records, had been acquitted, and it was so noted in the Weekly News Letter. A later dispatch, however, contained the information that the jury in the case had disagreed, the vote standing ten for acquittal and two for conviction. It is now stated that the case will be re-tried.

LABOR ON LAKE VESSELS

Washington, Feb. 17.--V. A. Olander, Secretary of the Lake Seamen's Union, recently testified before the Stanley Steel Investigating committee, relative to the United States Steel Company. He explained the welfare plan of the Lake Carriers' Association, and designated it as a scheme employed by the Company to prohibit organization and to reduce seamen to serfdom. The maritime section of the Steel Trust is a prominent member of the Lake Carriers' Association.

LABOR COMMITTEE GETS BILL

Washington, Feb. 17.--A contest for possession of the Borah childrens' bureau bill, which recently passed the senate, resulted in the reference of the bill to the Labor Committee of the House. The measure had been assigned to the interstate commerce committee, and an investigation had already been begun. Chairman Wilson of the labor committee, and member of the labor group in congress, claimed that his committee had already reported a similar bill and should have possession of the Borah Bill. The House gave it to Mr. Wilson's committee by a vote of 175 to 113.

COURT EXPLAINS ACT

Columbus, O. Feb. 17.--The Ohio supreme court has handed down an opinion showing on what grounds it upheld the workmen's compensation act. The court explains that the powers granted under the act constitute a valid exercise of police power; that it does not deprive one of property rights without due process of law; that the act does not clothe the state liability board of awards with judicial power, but makes it merely an administration board, and that it does not make an arbitrary and unjust classification.

DIRECT ELECTIONS UNSETTLED

Washington, Feb. 17.--It is rumored that an attempt will be made in the Senate to recede from the Bristow Amendment to the resolution for a constitutional amendment for direct election of United States senators. The Bristow amendment provides for federal control of senatorial elections. After six months of effort to agree the conferees have decided to report a disagreement to their respective houses.

Electrical Workers of Billings, Mont., secured increase of 25 cents per day, nine-hour day and union shop after strike of twenty-four hours.

SECURE INCREASE IN WAGES

Norfolk, Va. Feb. 17.--The conferences between the federated crafts and management of the Seaboard Air Line railway have been concluded and an amiable settlement reached. A one cent per hour increase was granted to the machinists, boilermakers, blacksmiths and painters and one-half cent per hour increase for sheet metal workers. This increase affects the employees at Savannah, Americus, Jacksonville, Fernandina, Waldo, Tallahassee, River Junction and Tampa. Employees who have been in the service for five years were also granted a division pass, for ten years service a system pass, and fifteen years a family pass. In addition, any employee in the service one year can get a pass over foreign lines twice annually for himself or family. The men secured everything contended for.

OREGON CONDITIONS

Portland, Ore. Feb. 17.--The Central Labor Council of this City has forwarded to the state officials of all the States, as well as to the labor organizations, a statement of conditions in Oregon. It seems that through the efforts of hostile employers, promoters, real estate agents and others, the country has been flooded with alluring advertisements of the great opportunities offered in this State and large numbers of people have migrated here to find that they have been hoaxed. The result is that there is a large number of people in the State who are the victims of these advertisements. The statement concludes with stating: "We welcome to our State men and women who have a true understanding of conditions in Oregon. There is room for such emigrants to aid us in the development of our resources. What we protest against is the unscrupulous exploitation of deluded people."

PROMOTION BILL

Washington, Feb. 17.--Radical changes in the railway postal service will result if the bill introduced by Senator Penrose is approved by Congress and the president. The measure provides for the classification of the salaries of railway postal clerks, so as to inaugurate a system of annual promotions, based on efficiency of service and also permitting the transfer of postal clerks to the railway mail service and vice versa. The salaries of railway clerks are divided into four grades. Employees in grade one will receive \$900; grade two \$1000; grade three \$1100; and in grade four up to \$1800; chief clerks are not to receive more than \$2000. In postoffices, transfer offices and terminal post offices salaries range from \$900 to \$1500.

WOODEN CARS EXPENSIVE

Washington, Feb. 17.--The railroads have lost their first appeal from the 1911 law permitting no postoffice payments to railroads for mail carried in wooden mail cars run between steel cars. It is given out that the postoffice auditor knocked off \$568.72 from the July bills of the Missouri Pacific and Iron Mountain railroads and the railroads appealed. The comptroller of the treasury sustained the auditor, despite that the railroads made the plea of confiscation.

WILL REMAIN IN WASHINGTON

Washington, Feb. 17.--The general offices of the International Association of Machinists will remain here. The referendum vote just completed on this proposition declared overwhelmingly in favor of this city. At the last convention of the organization it was decided to change the headquarters city and the organization as a whole sanctioned the change to St. Louis, Mo. Later, however, an agitation was started and another referendum secured, the result of which is noted above.

LOOKS LIKE BIG STRIKE

London, Feb. 17.--A conference of the representatives of 860,000 coal miners in the United Kingdom, held in London recently, confirmed the decision reached by recent ballot to bring about a national stoppage of work in the coal mines February 29, unless in the meantime the mine owners accept the principle of a minimum wage for all men and boys employed underground. Upwards of 40,000 miners employed in the mines in Derbyshire have handed in their notices to quit work and immense numbers are doing likewise in other districts.

LIFE SAVERS' RECORD

Washington, Feb. 17.--The life saving service gave assistance in 1,461 marine disasters during the last fiscal year, according to the report of the superintendent of the service, just made public. Only 37 persons lost their lives out of a total of 8,846 involved. The superintendent of the service recommends legislation providing retirement pay for members of life saving crews who may be incapacitated for duty.

PROHIBITS THIRD TERM

Washington, Feb. 17.--A constitutional prohibition against a third presidential term is provided for in an amendment introduced in the senate by Senator Reed of Missouri. It does not change the length of the presidential term, but makes any person ineligible who has served two terms, a full term and a portion of another or who has served a portion of two terms. The resolution went to the judiciary committee.

PROPOSES SIX-YEAR TERM

Washington, Feb. 17.--A six year term for the president of the United States, coupled with ineligibility for reelection, is proposed in an amendment to the federal constitution, which Senator Works of California has introduced in the senate. The resolution has been referred to the senate committee on judiciary and special efforts are to be made to get action on it prior to the adjournment of congress.

TO MAKE PORTO RICANS CITIZENS

Washington, Feb. 17.--A bill to confer citizenship upon Porto Ricans has been introduced in the house of representatives by Congressman Jones of Virginia, chairman of the insular affairs committee of the house.

BURNS' SLEUTH GETS JOLT

Washington, Feb. 17.--In the controversy before the Lorimer investigating committee, in which a stenographer's report, taken from a dictograph, was brought into question, there has been conducted an investigation. The stenographic notes of the Burns' stenographer have been shown to have been largely faked. An experiment was conducted and the stenographer given an opportunity to demonstrate his ability in the same manner that he claimed he took the notes which were introduced as evidence. In the test he failed, showing that his former story was not in accord with the facts. A number of stenographers corroborated the statement of the official stenographer of the committee that the notes taken by the detective's stenographer were faked.

EXCLUSION LAW FAILS

Washington, Feb. 17.--That the Chinese exclusion law fails to accomplish its avowed purposes has been pointed out in the report of the commissioner of the bureau of immigration for the fiscal year 1911, which has just been made public. The report states that the methods adopted to violate the law were so extensive and complicated as to beggar description. It is stated that one of the principal difficulties consists of properly guarding the Canadian and Mexican boundaries. It is claimed that unless the exclusion law is strengthened, the next decade will witness the entering to the United States, on citizenship claims allowed, of more than fifty thousand Chinese.

WANTS TO ABOLISH MILL

Columbia, S. C., Feb. 17.--The Governor of this State in a message to the legislature emphatically recommends that the hosiery mill operated by convicts in the state penitentiary be abolished, and that the convicts be employed on work designed for the exclusive state use. The Governor claims that the hosiery mill has been and is a fertile breeding place for disease, mostly tuberculosis, and closes his message with the following words: "I desire no friction, no row, and no unpleasantness, but action, and it must be had by you or me. Which?"

ANOTHER RETIREMENT BILL

Washington, Feb. 17.--Congressman Maher, one of the labor group in congress, has introduced a bill calling for the retirement of civil service employes in the postoffice department who have reached the age of 60 years, providing for half pay thereafter. Similar measures are already pending.

OFFICERS RE-ELECTED

Washington, Feb. 17.--George F. Hedrick has been re-elected president of the International Brotherhood of Painters, and J. C. Skemp has been re-elected general secretary-treasurer, for the ensuing term.

Metal Polishers of Fremont, O., have secured a 10 per cent increase in one shop and are on strike in another for same increase.

A LEGISLATIVE HINT

Washington, Feb. 17.--In 1897, the Legislature of the State of Pennsylvania enacted into law, "An Act to regulate the hours of mechanics, working men and laborers in the employ of the State, or Municipal corporations, or otherwise engaged in public works." This law was contested in the Courts and was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the State. One of the concluding sentences of the decision is important, and is as follows: "If this were an attempt by general law to regulate the hours of labor throughout the State, the argument in support of the act based on legislative exercise of police power would call for consideration, but as the case stands, discussion of this larger question would be wholly irrelevant." It will be seen that the court states substantially that if a law were passed covering all labor, an argument based on the legislative exercise of police power would call for consideration by the courts. This is an important point.

----- FITCH ON LABOR CONDITIONS

Washington, Feb. 17--John A. Fitch of Pittsburg, was recently before the Stanley Steel Investigating Committee, and explained his reasons for criticising the United States Steel Corporation's treatment of its employees. Mr. Fitch made a study of the labor and social conditions of the Pittsburg field for the Russell Sage Survey in 1907 and 1908, and later published his observations in book form. "The Steel Corporation wields such an enormous power, that it is a menace to the country", said Mr. Fitch. "Conditions of work in the steel mills are demoralizing. Thinking, red-blooded workmen do not care as much about welfare work as they do about their rights: they are not as anxious for sanitation as they are for justice." Chairman Stanley asked Mr. Fitch who the officers were of the association for which he had acted, and Mr. Fitch replied that J. P. Morgan was the Treasurer.

----- RAILROAD DEPARTMENT GROWING

Chicago, Feb. 17--The Railroad Department of the American Federation of Labor, like the other Departments, is increasing in membership. At the last meeting held in this city the Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers and the Brotherhood of Painters were admitted to membership. The Painters were admitted with the understanding that the jurisdictional rights of the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen shall not be interfered with, and that both shall have the right to organize painters. Henry R. Perham, of the Railroad Telegraphers, was elected as President of the Department to succeed himself, by unanimous vote. J. A. Franklin, of the Boilermakers, was elected to the office of Vice-President. A. B. Lowe, President of the Maintenance of Way Employees, although not desiring to remain as Secretary-Treasurer, accepted the office for the time being. The outlook for the coming year is, indeed bright with all the affiliated organizations in good physical condition to continue the work already outlined.

Horseshoers have increased their wages in La Cross, Wis., the scale now being \$3 per day.

Draperloom weavers of Brunswick, Me., secured 4 per cent increase.

CONTEMPT CASE STILL ON

Washington, Feb. 17.--The celebrated contempt case is still in progress in Justice Wright's court. John Mitchell has completed his testimony and left the city. Secretary Frank Morrison has been on the witness stand for a considerable length of time. One feature of the examination of Mr. Morrison is worthy of note. Attorney Davenport, for the Anti Boycott Association, questioned him relative to the word "allegiance," which occurs in the obligation of the typographical union, of which, as all know, Mr. Morrison is a member. The inference of Attorney Davenport was clearly to the effect that the word "allegiance" in the typographical obligation was inimical to American citizenship. The introductory paragraph to the typographical obligation states specifically that the obligation refers only to the printing trades, and by no stretch of imagination could the obligation be construed as vitiating the loyalty, fealty, or devotion of its members to the government of the United States. What is purposed by this angle in the interrogatories is not plain, but evidently is done to not only cloud the situation but to imply that which in substance is not true. President Gompers will again go on the stand after Mr. Morrison has concluded.

RAILROAD WRECKS

Washington, Feb. 17.--The federal express on the New Haven railroad was wrecked near Leeset Island, Conn., recently, throwing three pullmans off the track and badly shaking up the occupants, several of whom were prostrated. The cause of the accident was a split rail. Owing to this wreck two other fast trains had a narrow escape from running into them. A wreck also occurred near Belspring, Va., when a west bound Norfolk and Western passenger train crashed into a freight. Three persons were killed and five injured, all being employees. The oriental limited, the Great Northern crack coast train, was wrecked at Doyon Station, near Devils Lake, N. D. A dozen passengers were injured.

STOP IMPROVEMENTS

Washington, Feb. 17.--Information comes from railroad sources that the Illinois Central railroad, on which there has been a strike for some considerable length of time, has abandoned all improvement work. It is stated that owing to this strike the company is not financially capable of continuing improvements. It is further stated that the Illinois Central has been unable to meet the demand made upon it for shipping facilities.

NEGOTIATIONS PENDING

Washington Feb. 17.--Negotiations are in progress with the Illinois Central railroad officials, and the organizations on strike looking toward a settlement. Nothing definite, however, has as yet been arrived at, but the outlook is promising.

ARIZONA A STATE

Washington, Feb. 17.--On St. Valentine's day, February 14, President Taft signed the proclamation admitting Arizona to the Union.